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BRIEFS

FORMER ERLC STAFFER TO HEAD FAITH OFFICE

WASHINGTON (BP) — Shannon Royce, former director of government relations and legislative counsel at the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville, has been appointed as the Trump administration's director of the Center for Faith-Based and Community Partnerships. Royce also served as chief of staff and chief operating officer at the Family Research Council in Washington, D.C., as counsel to U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Ia.), and as executive director of the Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation in Burke, Va.

TENNESSEE MOVES TO PROTECT THE UNBORN

NASHVILLE (BP) — Republican Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam signed a bill May 12 that requires abortionists in that state to evaluate unborn babies for their ability to live outside the womb after 20 weeks gestation, before an abortion will be allowed. The new law bans abortions on unborn babies shown to be viable and requires medical opinions from two abortionists. Violators could be slapped with possible felony charges, sent to prison for up to three years, and have their medical licenses revoked. The law makes exceptions for cases in which carrying a baby to term endangers the mother's life or vital organs.

TEXAS LAW SHIELDS PASTORS' SERMONS

AUSTIN (BP) — Texas Governor Greg Abbott, a Republican, signed legislation May 21 that prohibits Texas government agencies from subpoenaing the sermons of religious leaders. Four of the five Houston-area pastors whose sermons became the target of a sweeping 2014 subpoena "fishing expedition" by city attorneys representing then-Mayor Annise Parker, a Democrat who was in a political dispute with them over LGBT rights, joined the gubernatorial signing ceremony. Parker eventually withdrew the subpoenas after withering criticism.

Trump's Israel trip draws praise



TEMPLE VISIT — U.S. President Donald Trump's visit to Israel May 22-23, his first international trip since being inaugurated in January, included a stop at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, the only portion still standing of the Jewish Temple depicted in Scripture in the time of Jesus. (BP screen capture from YouTube)

Embassy move to Jerusalem viewed as real possibility

JERUSALEM (BP and local reports) — U.S. President Trump's visit to Israel last week drew praise from some Southern Baptists and led some of them to renew calls for moving the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

"For several years the Jewish people in America and Messianic Jewish communities have been pleading with our government to bring back the relationship that we once had with Israel and the Jewish people," said Ric Worshill, president of the Southern Baptist Messianic Fellowship.

"Israel has never stopped supporting the U.S. Now that President Trump is fulfilling his promises to rebuild our relationship and support of Israel as our main ally in the Middle East, we are seeing a powerful revival of encouragement

see TRUMP on p. 9

Evolution takes a hit from latest discoveries

NASHVILLE (BP and local reports) — A cache of newly discovered fossils from an ancient human species underscores the inadequacy of materialistic evolution to explain human origins, says a biologist associated with the intelligent design movement.

In addition, a Southern Baptist paleontologist claims the fossils, discovered in South Africa, fit well with biblical chronology, representing a human species alive shortly after God dispersed men and women from the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9.

Remains of a species dubbed *Homo naledi* were first discovered in 2013-14. An article published this month in the journal *eLife* revealed scientists now have unearthed remains of at least 18 *Homo naledi*, a species said to stand about five feet tall, weigh 100 pounds, and possess small brains and curved fingers as well as many features that resemble modern humans.

Lee Berger, the article's lead author, told *The Guardian* the fossilized remains seem to have been deliberately buried after death and date to approximately 300,000 years ago. Because the remains were located in

see EVOLUTION on p. 8

Egypt bombing seen as 'call to action'

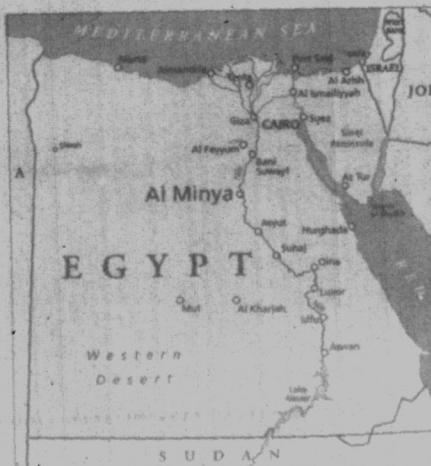
MINYA, Egypt (BP and local reports) — A May 26 terrorist attack against Coptic Christians in Egypt that left at least 28 people dead has been characterized as a call to action for believers in America.

"We cannot ignore such sacrifice and such pain," said Mike Edens, a New Orleans Seminary professor who served with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB) and lived in Egypt for 17 years. "The Spirit of God is moving the church into these painful situations" to pray, comfort, and share the Gospel with Muslims, he said.

Ten gunmen opened fire on two buses carrying Christian worshippers to a monastery in southern Egypt and a pickup truck carrying workmen, according to media reports. In addition to the more than two dozen dead, at least 22 others were injured.

The attack left children and senior adults among the dead. The New York Times reported, with some shot at point-blank range after terrorists boarded the buses. Only three children survived the attack, according to Fox News.

see EGYPT on p. 11



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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

The Champion

Mention to even a tepid sports fan the name Tim Tebow, and he'll probably know about whom you're talking. Maybe he didn't watch much ice hockey this week and isn't up to speed on who's on top of the European soccer circuit (please hurry, football season). He probably can't recall the presidential debates of last year, but he'll know Tim Tebow.

The devout, publicly-unashamed Christian quarterback and progeny of missionaries came to mind a few weeks ago when I read that he smacked a home run in his first at-bat with the Columbia Fireflies, a New York Mets minor league team in South Carolina. Two days later, he hit his second home run.

Anyone who has ever picked up a baseball bat at any level knows how hard it is to hit home runs, not to mention home runs that close together. The former University of Florida All-American quarterback, who has two national college football championships and a Heisman Trophy under his belt, has endured harsh and sarcastic criticism for expressing his faith in Jesus Christ and openly giving God the glory for his successes — and his successes are many.

"I don't hate him," former Denver Broncos quarterback Jake Plummer said of Tebow, who played for the Broncos after Plummer. "I just would rather not have to hear (Jesus) every single time he takes a good snap or makes a good hand-off."

Other players, fans, and commentators made similar or worse comments even as Tebow led the Broncos to victory after victory. Thankfully, not everyone agreed with his detractors.

George Diaz of the Orlando Sentinel newspaper wrote at the time, "(He) is a young man of faith, and that's something that seems to be extremely troublesome for some people. Perhaps it's because it forces us to look deeper at ourselves and wonder if there is an after-life, and whether or not our actions will deem us worthy of eternal salvation."

"America seems to prefer athletes who don't have much personal or religious conviction. Just

run a 4.4 40 please, run your post route precisely, and by all means hit the wide receiver as he breaks on the out pattern."

Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, writing in Huff Post Sports at the time, said, "The attacks on Tebow are bizarre, the hatred shown to him by critics strange. People seem to loathe his missionary work more than Ben Roethlisberger's treatment of women... They seem more offended by his morality than by Kobe Bryant's infidelity. Tebow is touching some real nerves."

Cathy Lynn Grossman of USA Today pointed out:

"His against-all-odds heroics [for the Broncos] brought CBS a mind-blowing 25.9 overnight rating, the best for a wild card football game in almost 25 years."

Sports websites staggered under an onslaught of hits. NFL.com reported views of videos in the hour after the exciting playoff game) were up 385% over Wild Card Sunday last year.

Tebow hit more than one million mentions on Twitter. Sunday night, the rate of tweets announcing the victory hit 9,420 per second. The all-time record was set last month when a TV screening of a Japanese movie drew 25,088 tweets-per-second. But Tebow still beats the 8,868 tweets-per-second rate reached when Beyoncé announced her pregnancy during the 2011 MTV Music Awards.

Both Tebow and his favorite Bible verse, John 3:16 (proclaiming Jesus' promise of salvation), were in the top three Google Trends throughout most of Monday. Many people noted he threw for exactly 316 yards, an unintentional allusion to the Bible verse he etched into his eye black while winning national championships at the University of Florida.

NFL sales of Tebow's No. 15 Broncos jersey are second only to those for Green Bay Packers QB Aaron Rodgers, who won the Super Bowl last year.

No one knows if Tim Tebow will also be a baseball superstar as he works his way up to the Major Leagues through the Mets system. We do know, however, to whom he will give the glory — win or lose. That's not a bad thing for the nation to see, again.

To young women in ministry

God in His graciousness brought many wise women into my life when I started my first ministry position a few years ago. They cheered me on not because I was anyone special, but because they had run a little farther in the race and were familiar with the joys, the stumbling blocks, and the perseverance needed for a young woman in her first years of ministry.

By no means have I "arrived" in ministry or leadership, but I have learned a few lessons along the way and maybe somewhere out there is a young woman in her first years of ministry who needs someone to stand up and cheer, pound their feet on the bleachers, and remind her of the goal, the stakes, and the prize that awaits her at the finish line. Here are a few "cheers" from one young woman in ministry to another:

■ Buy a bookshelf (and fill it). As I read books on leadership, ministry to women and discipleship, God continued to prune my spirit and I learned a valuable lesson: Always keep a teachable heart and a humble spirit. Keep reading, learning and growing.

■ Find your prayer warriors (and be honest). As I write this, I know I have three gray-haired women of valor who are lifting me and my ministry to God's throne and it has been through these three saints that God has taught me about the strength of a mustard seed, the peace that comes from resting in God, and how to develop a prayer life.

■ Keep the Sabbath (and prepare for it). Practice this spiritual discipline until it is like a well-oiled machine in your life. It is a gift from God to you and your ministry that teaches obedience, protects you from burnout, and equips you in part for every good work.

■ Invest in a few good women (and make it a lifestyle). As you lead, look around you for a few good women who are faithful, available and teachable. Meet with them regularly, share life with them, disciple them and teach them how to be disciplinarians themselves.



Guest opinion
with Melissa Meredith

I've adopted this lifestyle and I will say that aside from my personal time with the Lord each day, nothing gets my feet moving and my heart pumping like seeing a sister I've walked with turn around and invest in others. Invest in a few, and make disciples one woman at a time.

Perhaps, too, these words from Hebrews in the Message translation may kindle a flame in your heart to keep running the race set before you: "Do you see what this means — all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running — and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, Who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how He did it. Because He never lost sight of where He was headed — that exhilarating finish in and with God — He could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now He's there, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility He plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls!" (Hebrews 12:1-3, MSG)

Know there is a fellow co-laborer cheering you on!

Meredith is director of Southwestern Seminary's Horner Homemaking House and a 2013 graduate of the seminary with a master of divinity with a concentration in women's studies. This column is adapted from the seminary's Biblical Woman website, biblicalwoman.com, and appears here courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for length and style.

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Second Send Conference in Texas draws thousands

DALLAS (BP and local reports) — Among a sea of attendees and volunteers in the Dr. Pepper Arena, the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and the International Mission Board (IMB) Send Conference challenged attendees to examine and redefine their lives on mission.

Three Send Conferences were scheduled for 2017. The first was held in February in Long Beach, Ca. The second was in Dallas in May. The final conference will be held July 25-26 in Orlando, Fl.

More than 4,000 people registered for the sold-out conference May 19-20, held less than 30 miles north of Dallas in Frisco, which drew people from all states and three continents.

"Be careful not to manufacture a heart for missions outside a heart for Christ," IMB president David Platt said to the crowd during opening session. "There is no one without the other, and if you think there is, you've got to redefine your thinking. There are times in your life that are redefining, and that's what we're praying the next couple of days will be."

NAMB and IMB sponsored the event. The theme, Redefine, brought church revitalizer John Herring of First Church in Prosper, Texas, back to Send even though he had attended the first one in Long Beach, Ca., earlier this year in February.

This time, Herring brought 20 church members to Dallas for two days of biblical teaching and next steps.

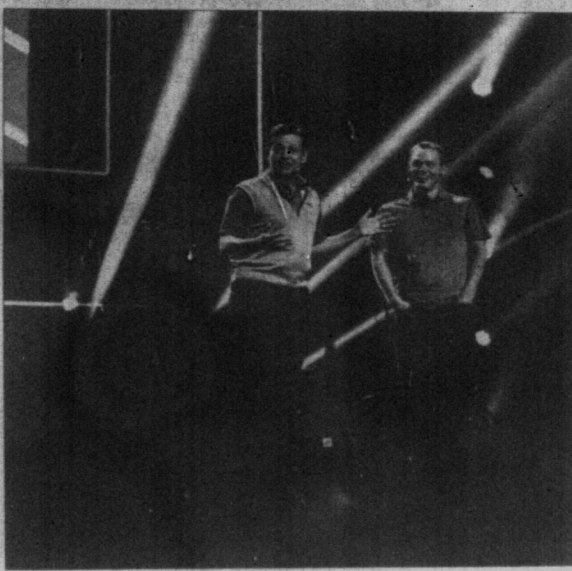
"The conference was encouraging and refreshing for us personally, and it was incredibly helpful for us in our work at First Prosper," Herring said. "We talk a lot about Jesus' mission at our church, that we are called to be sent. Send helped us refocus on that mission and put feet to it."

Send in Dallas included worship led by Austin Stone Worship, Thomas Keys III, and Crowder.

The meeting also had main sessions and breakouts with 30 diverse topics and speakers:

"The breakout sessions were especially helpful," Herring noted. "At the conclusion of Send, my notebook was filled with pages of ideas and resources. What a blessing to have some 'blue sky' moments under the wisdom of these experienced leaders."

Church planter Aaron Clayton of Remedy Church in Waxahachie, Texas, was also taking notes with hopes to bring back "some nuts and bolts for how we can effectively equip and send church planters."



▲ HIGH PRAISE — Austin Stone Worship led music for the main sessions at the Send Conference in Dallas May 19-20. The conference, presented by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board in Alpharetta, Ga., and the Southern Baptist International Mission Board in Richmond, Va., included five worship sessions, four main speakers, three different breakout times featuring 30 guest speakers, and one message: to redefine life on mission. (BP photo)

▲ BRINGING GREETINGS — Southern Baptist International Mission Board president David Platt (right) and North American Mission Board president Kevin Ezell led their agencies in hosting the Send Conference 2017 in Dallas. The focus of the event was on redefining life on mission and providing attendees with their next steps to putting their faith into action. (BP photo)

"Be careful not to manufacture a heart for missions outside a heart for Christ. There is no one without the other, and if you think there is, you've got to redefine your thinking."

David Platt
IMB president

"I am also looking forward to bringing back some fresh enthusiasm and energy," Clayton said. "I am hoping our people catch more of the vision for why and how they can live on mission in all of life. I hope they feel better equipped and more confident

themselves and in their ability to rally together in community to live out the mission of God."

With breakouts sessions with names such as, Addressing Poverty Through Local Schools; Risk in Missions; Leading Women to Advance

ing engaged in the community and coming to this Send conference, I feel more refreshed than ever. It's awesome to see how people here are so willing to support one another in living on mission for God's glory. Everything we do is for Him."

A similar spirit and enthusiasm for missions gripped many hearts at the event. Georgia College and State University student (GCSU) Carson Gregors and her peers drove 14 hours from Milledgeville to attend Send in Dallas.

Gregors and 12 others started Full Accord Ministry (FAM) to serve their fellow students on campus with authentic family relationships. They attended the Send Conference to take leadership tips and engagement tactics home to students at GCSU.

"I was especially looking forward to what Kathy Litton had to say about women in mission," she said. "She has incredible insight and hearing her breakout talk was inspiring. It was so great to hear such strong truth spoken over discipleship. It revolutionized how I'm going to approach my small group when I get back to school in the fall."

"It's so encouraging to see thousands of people at an event focused on helping believers take Jesus to the people around them as an everyday lifestyle," said Kevin Ezell, NAMB's president.

"I am thrilled as well to see, such a young, diverse group. So many pastors worked hard to bring their people. The conference is for them, so it is great to see so many participate."

Every video, social media post, breakout session, and main session was designed to share messages that moved people toward their next missional opportunity.

"It's exhilarating to see local churches taking mission seriously," Platt said, "and that's what this conference is all about: Men and women from churches in all 50 states and Canada — and a few other countries, as well — considering how God has sent them right where they live for the spread of the Gospel and contemplating where God might lead them around the world to people who've never heard of the Gospel."

"It's an awesome sight," he said, "to see thousands of people at a conference representing thousands of churches in the SBC and beyond who together are saying that we want to spend our lives making disciples from our neighbors to the nations."

For more information, visit sendconference.com.

Just a few weeks ago the National Football League conducted their annual draft. That's the process each year where each team selects the eligible, outstanding college player that they may want to bring on their team to help them to improve. It is a supposedly scientific venture as they measure, test, check everything about a player, and think they are picking the most valuable one at the time for their team. Still, it's an inexact science. Some of the people who look to have so much potential will fail, and others who are drafted seem to blossom later as time goes on.

Most of the time the most outstanding players go in the first few rounds of selection. In the later rounds, commentators and even the team gurus refer to some of the players that are taken as "projects." What they mean is the player has the skills, but many of his skills need to be improved. He's got potential but will have to work hard to get there. He is a project in the making. The player may not be ready next year or the next, but the gurus have faith that he will improve and the project will pay off.

I'm not a big draft guy and only watch to see if some college players in which I have interest get drafted. However, some people are just obsessed with the draft, even the so-called projects that are chosen for future development. I read and listened enough to what was going on at the draft to get me to thinking about how many times Jesus drafted or chose a project as one of His disciples. I suppose it's fair to say that when He chose Simon, apparently in the first round of that draft process, He chose a huge project that needed a lot of improvement and a great deal of skill-honing — so much so that at the very time He picked him to be one of His disciples, He told him, "You are Simon, but that's not what you're going to



God's Projects

stay. You are going to become Peter," literally the rock, and sure enough over the years Jesus' touch in his life reshaped him and ultimately Simon Peter became the solid rock dedicated to serving Jesus.

In truth, all the Jesus' disciples were projects. There Jesus was, selecting men who weren't educated by classic means, were ignorant and unlearned as they would be referred to, but they were going to have to preach sermons and write books in such a manner that until this day we feast spiritually on what they gave us. Far beyond those first disciples, I think of us who are disciples now. In fact, none of us started out at our best. We started out blessed, but we had a long way to go and probably many of us still do, to be where the Lord really wants us to be and what He wants us to achieve.

What will it take to know and to grow to excel to reach our potential, for the project each of us are to be all that God wants us to be? It's probably a long list but let me just give you three quick thoughts of how a project can become an effective servant for Jesus.

The first thing I would suggest is determination. If you don't want to grow in the Lord, it's doubtful you will. If you want to know the fullness of what He has for you, you must be determined to give yourself to Him, walk with Him, trust Him, and live in relationship where He can take all that you are and make that even better. You have to have a determination. I often recall the old cliché that practice makes perfect. I understand what that means, but I understand more since someone enlarged on the idea and added, "It's not practice that makes perfect, but it's perfect practice that makes perfect." There is a real truth in that. We have to keep the highest standards of excellence and commitment in following Jesus. We each have to determine for ourselves that this will be the standard if we're going to be a project that becomes a blessing at the hands of the One who created us.

A second attribute that is needed is discipline. It's interesting to watch some football and basketball and baseball players who have so much talent, great vision, wonderful reflexes, incred-

ible strength, and yet are not disciplined enough to harness all that so that they would become valuable to the team. Discipline is a vital piece of any person's life in achieving what God has in store for them. I often tell groups of folks that the only original thought that I ever had was, "Giftedness without discipline is a curse." Sadly, I have watched people with tremendous gifts — great musical ability, great speaking ability, a wonderful personality, or great mental acumen — never achieve what they could and should because of their lack of discipline. They could not harness their giftedness and too often lived outside the bounds even of right and wrong. Their giftedness made them think they could do whatever they wanted whenever they wanted to do it, and that began to erode their giftedness to the point that they had no effectiveness at all.

A third thought about helping us to grow in our potential as a project is our destination. What will you look like if you become one of the starters on Jesus' team? Where will it take you? Eventually, you will not just be a star. You will become more and more like Jesus. His plan for every one of our lives is not that we just become spiritual celebrities, but that you and I become a project that is turned into the likeness of Jesus so that when folks see us, they'll see what Jesus looks like. When they hear us or sense our spirit, they will catch a drift of what Jesus looks like, thinks like, talks like, how He treats people. You and I — in fact everyone I know — is a project in process. Allow this day to be a day that Jesus touches you in various areas of your life and shapes one more of those pieces to be just like Him. God help you and God bless you.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

Bible Drills



Children and Students from **PROVIDENCE** and **POP-LAR CREEK NATIONS CHURCHES, KILMI-CHAE**, worked together to participate in Bible Drills this year. These students advanced to the county and state finals with all students receiving a superior or an excellent.



IMMANUEL CHURCH, GREENWOOD, recognizes its drillers. Shown, front are Caitlin Watson, Owen Farmer, and Timothy Gardner; back, Davis Gardner, Carleigh Rose McCrimmon, Maggie Jennings, and Hanna Farmer.



TUSCOLA CHURCH, LEAKE ASSOCIATION, recognized Matthew Birdsong, Anna Shea Sturdivant, and Ethan Birdsong for their achievements at the State Bible Drill in April.



EPHESUS CHURCH, FOREST, recognizes its participants in church, county, and state drills.



INGOMAR CHURCH, NEW ALBANY, recognizes its drillers in the children's and youth drills. Terry Cutrer, pastor.



The Christian Action Commission educates and equips our churches and ministries on social, ethical, and moral issues. We help turn orthodoxy into orthopraxy.

We want a Biblical World View. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (II Timothy 3:16-17 KJV) I love the gospel and love to preach the Gospel, but we are "to declare unto you all the counsel of God." (Acts 20:27 KJV) We have "red-lettered" Christians today who only adhere to the words of Christ. I enjoy reading the "red" words in my quiet time, but I am to preach the whole counsel of His Word.

Biblical Concepts

I understand "context." Within its context, a passage has one primary explanation and multiple applications. I understand that there are different covenants in the Bible, but Biblical principles and concepts are timeless — they are eternal.

I understand the importance of historical background in studying Scripture. You can never understand the "WORD" until you understand their "WORLD." But there is ABSOLUTE TRUTH, and we have that absolute truth in God's Word. Some things are generational; they are cultural; but

Biblical principles of morality and ethics are not generational or cultural.

God has an absolute standard of right and wrong. It does not fluctuate with the circumstances. We do not believe in situational ethics. Someone may say, "Well, everything is relative." NO — everything is not relative. God has an absolute standard. He does not change — His standard does not change. (Malachi 3:6 KJV)

Here is our problem — too many confuse personal preference and opinions with Biblical principles and concepts. They advocate customs and tradi-

tions that change with the years. If we would stay with Biblical principles, we would not have to adjust with the times. Methodologies change. The message shouldn't. The presentation can be contemporary, but the principles should be consistent with the revealed word. Biblical principles should be good enough for any generation.

We must be willing to learn and utilize 'APOLOGETICS.' This is not an adjective; it is a noun. Many today do not believe the Bible to be a supernatural book. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be

ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." (I Peter 3:15 KJV)

"Preach the WORD." (II Timothy 4:2 KJV) But make sure it is the word, not what you or I think or prefer. All our concepts should be Biblical Concepts.

We would be delighted to do a "Lamplighter Conference" on these issues in your church, association, etc. We can customize your conference as to length and issues. We are available — call us.

Digby is executive director-treasurer of the Christian Action Commission. He can be reached at (601) 292-3329/office, (662) 284-9163/cell, or by e-mail at kdigby@christianaction.com.

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PrayerLink ministry revitalization focuses on mission, logo redesign

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — Calling on the Southern Baptist PrayerLink leadership team to "fan into flame a passionate pursuit of God in prayer," Chris Schofield opened the group's winter meeting in January as PrayerLink's first executive director.

"The Lord is not through with what we began years ago," said Schofield, director of the Office of Prayer for Evangelization and Spiritual Awakening for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina in Cary.

"This ministry cannot be about us. It must not look to the past, but adapt to changing realities and press on to what lies ahead," Schofield said, according to a report in SBC LIFE's pre-convention 2017 issue released earlier this month.

SBC LIFE is the journal of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee in Nashville.

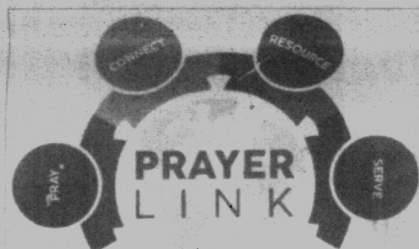
The PrayerLink leadership team settled on four verbs during its two-day meeting to convey its mission, and voted to redesign its logo to reflect that mission.

The new logo incorporates the group's global prayer focus; it's passion to lift up Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17:20-21; and its desire by praying, connecting, resourcing, and serving to join hands with people of every race and kindred.

"We serve through praying," Schofield said. "Then we serve the greater group by putting together the logistics of our meetings" so others have a model to emulate in their respective settings whether church-wide prayer services, small group gatherings, or associational meetings.

PrayerLink is composed of prayer coordinators from Southern Baptist entities, the Woman's Missionary Union, state Baptist conventions, and Southern Baptist ethnic and language fellowships.

Working in collaboration with associations, state Baptist conventions, and SBC entities, PrayerLink seeks to foster a Great Commission prayer mindset among Southern Baptists and other Christ-followers and promote Great Commission prayer ministries woven throughout the Southern Baptist network of churches.



John 17:20-21

The Southern Baptist North American Mission Board (NAMB) in Alpharetta, Ga., hosted the PrayerLink leadership team's meeting.

William Brown, NAMB's supporting church coordinator, and Maggie Green, endorsed missionary services coordinator, introduced two prayer resources designed to undergird church planters:

■ PrayerConnect, "a weekly prayer email sent to subscribers with prayer requests submitted by NAMB missionaries," Brown said.

■ Pray for Planters, an initiative to enlist at least 10,000 churches to pray for North American church planting missionaries. Pastors and individuals can register at PrayforPlanters.com to pray through a list of planters in a specific city, state, province, or college campus.

"Every believer can pray, and every church can help plant churches," the website states, encouraging churches to "take the first step" by "choosing a location and committing to pray for church planters there," and asking God to "save lives and transform communities through church planters across North America."

Church leaders can complete an online form to indicate their desire to pray. NAMB will send a list of planters to pray for and occasional updates of what God has done through their prayers.

Just for the Record



BEULAH CHURCH, DECATUR, held their Baby Dedication on May 14. Pictured left to right: Laura Ryals, Chris Ryals and Cailyn Ryals; Rob Roberts, Nikki Roberts and Reese Roberts; Zane Chattin, Stephanie Chattin and Eli Chattin. Pastor is Gary Rivers.



POPLAR SPRINGS CHURCH, MENDENHALL, recognized its high school seniors. Shown are Hallie Wadlington, pastor Ted Bowlin, and Issac Bowlin.



CARRIAGE HILLS CHURCH, SOUTH-AVEN, celebrated Senior Adult Sunday May 7. Shown is 91-yr-old Roma L. Thorn reading scripture. Matt Brady, pastor.



CALVARY CHURCH, BRAXTON, held their annual AWANA rewards program. Clubbers received awards and certificates. Lance Varner, pastor.



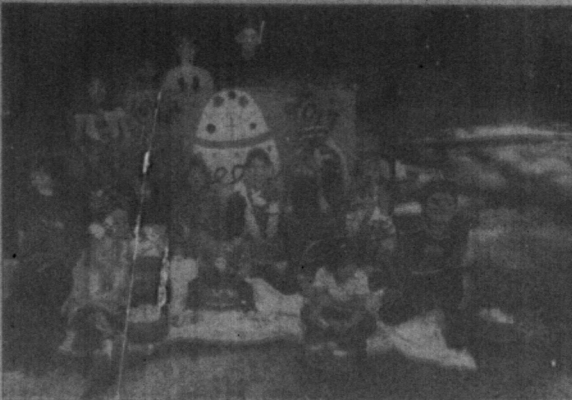
GA's from **CALVARY CHURCH, VICKSBURG**, enjoyed painting pots and planting flowers for their mothers.



EPHESUS CHURCH, FOREST, held vocation-laureate services on May 21. Pictured are Chris Harrison, Wilson Bell, and Tanya Harrison.



The nursery choir, kindergarten choir, and the children's choir from **FIRST CHURCH, EUPORA**, performed Easter Sunday morning.



FAIR RIVER CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, held its annual Easter egg hunt. Shown are some of the participants. Jay Anderson, pastor.



SCOTLAND CHURCH, CARROLL-MONTGOMERY ASSOCIATION, ordained John Jacks into the ministry May 21. Pictured is Bobby Oliver, Jacks, Bill Carpenter, and Jerry Woods.



TOOMSUBA CHURCH, LAUDERDALE ASSOCIATION, recognized three graduates May 21, presenting Bibles and gifts. Shown are Cooper Tanner, Addison Harrington, pastor Steven Wade, and Makenna Deavers.

Staff Changes



SCOTLAND CHURCH, CARROLL-MONTGOMERY ASSOCIATION, has called John Jacks, Booneville, as pastor. Shown are daughter Hannah, Jacks, his wife Misty, and son Liam.

Vacation Bible School

► **Victory Church, Bassfield:** June 5 – 9, 6 – 8 p.m.; ages 5 – grade 6. Contact pastor Nathan Barber if a ride is needed, (601) 517-2829.



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5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Phoenix Convention Center

Room North 231A/B/C (opposite 200)

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Register today at alumni.mc.edu/sbc2017

For more information contact Chad Phillips

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College and Seminary News



WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY recently inducted 21 students into Omicron Delta Kappa national leadership honor society. Students inducted were: Benjamin Brockway of Hattiesburg; Brian Cloys of Philadelphia; Patience Dearmon of Leakesville; Taylor Dowdy of Hattiesburg; Alexander Dupree of Brandon; Hannah Gravley of Picayune; Kaitlyn Hyde of Moss Point; William Kelly, of Aberdeen; Lindsay Knight of Hattiesburg; Sari Lada of Rammallah, Israel; Branden Lindsay of Simpsonville, South Carolina; Brooke Rogers of Waynesboro; Anna Sanford of Picayune; Jamie Sholar of Hattiesburg; Matthew Snell of Petal; McKayla Strebeck of Seminary; Abigail Sullivan of Mendenhall; Claresta Tasman of Paramaribo, Indonesia; Kaitlyn Thompson of Denham Springs, Louisiana; Kyle Wilhelm of Robinson, Texas; B. Lane Williamson of Pontotoc.

In other College News:

► Nineteen nursing students from **Mississippi College** will travel to five different South American villages along the Amazon to offer medical screenings June 9 – 19. It is the 25th year the MC School of Nursing has sponsored a summer mission trip overseas as part of the "Spirituality in Nursing" program.

► The following graduates from Mississippi received degrees during **New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary** commencement service May 13. Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Counseling: Kayla Morgan, Hattiesburg; Amber Warren, Glen Allan. Master of Divinity: Jonathan Guerry, Columbus; Jeremy Pippen, Laurel; Robert Parkin, Madison; Master of Theological Studies: Jerry East, Ellisville.

► **Mississippi College** is offering freshmen orientations in June and July. The initial June 1 – 2 sessions will get students prepared to transition from high school life to life on campus. Events begin with check-in at the Nelson Hall lobby from 8:30 a.m. until 9:30 a.m. on June 1. The second day of orientation features a breakfast for the student-athletes at the school cafeteria and an opportunity to break bread with coaches. A worship service is set for Swor Auditorium at 8:30 a.m. on June 2. Activities should wrap up around 11 a.m. that Friday. The cost is \$200 for freshmen, and \$65 for transfer students.



Cindy Melton was named **MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE'S** Distinguished Professor of the Year at the university's spring commencement in early May. She oversees the College of Education, a post she has held since January 2017, and has doubled as chair of the Department of Teacher Education and Leadership.



Baldwyn, Mississippi native Mary Beth Graves, Clinton, was named the winner of the Van "Doc" Quick Distinguished Staff Member Award for 2016-17 at **MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE'S** spring commencement in early May. A longtime Clinton resident, Quick was a revered former dean of students at MC, his Baptist-affiliated alma mater. He passed away a few years ago.

Revivals & Homecomings

► **Mt. Carmel Church, Edinburg:** Revival, June 4-7; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. – Wed., 7 p.m.; David Ford, speaker; Evelyn Dodd and Eddie Pilgrim, worship leaders; Randolph Scott, pastor.

► **Pleasant Valley Church, Meadville:** 100th anniversary, June 4; church history, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch and 1:30 p.m. celebration; Trent Moak, pastor.

► **Liberty Church, Carroll County:** Homecoming, June 4; services, 10:45 a.m., followed by fellowship and meal; Ron Burch, speaker.

► **First Church, Belzoni:** Revival, June 4 – 7, 7 p.m.; Matthew Johnson, speaker; Jack Hollingsworth, music; George C. Johnson, pastor.

► **Canaan Church, Benton County:** Homecoming, June 4; service, 11 a.m., fol-



DUCK HILL CHURCH, DUCK HILL, celebrated 177 years of service during their homecoming Apr. 23. Former pastor Paul Smith, guest speaker; former members, guest singers; covered dish luncheon; approximately 250 in attendance.

lowed by fellowship meal The Classic Masters; Paul and afternoon singing with Adams, pastor.

Southern Seminary wives reflect on Institute's 20 years

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — Alumni and students celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Seminary Wives Institute (SWI) at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., with testimonies from graduates from 1999 to 2017.

Each testimony revealed the eternal impact of SWI on women who have served in ministries from Louisville, Ky., to as far away as Zimbabwe.

The history of SWI dates back to February 1997 when Mary Mohler, wife of Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr., hosted some faculty wives to discuss interest in creating a new program to train seminary wives.

On May 8, 1997, 85 women attended an informational meeting for prospective students. The result of that meeting launched the SWI program that fall with 125 students kindled by the vision of Mary Mohler and three cofounders: Sharon Beougher, who still serves as an SWI faculty member; Virginia Walker; and Menda Sue Hatfield.

"People showed up; classes started," Mary Mohler said at a May 4 gala to celebrate SWI's 20th anniversary, "and we were on a roll and things were going well but we needed help... and the Lord so kindly grew this faculty as He grew Southern Seminary's faculty and so as my husband is hiring these wonderful new faculty members, wives were coming along with them and the amazing fact is God in all this was bringing faculty wives who had an interest in helping us, and each had an interest that



TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE — A gala to celebrate the Seminary Wives Institute on its 20th anniversary at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., featured current and former instructors, alumni, and students. (BP photo courtesy of Southern Seminary)

was not already being covered," Mary Mohler recounted.

Notable SWI faculty who helped set the foundation for the program include Tanya York, who came in 1997; Jodi Ware, 1998; Katherine Magnuson, 1999; Jaylynn Cook, 2000; Nora Allison, 2003; and Caffy Whitney, 2005.

Karen Allen, a 2006 graduate and former SWI instructor, shared how her first class immediately challenged her to pray fervently for the lost, including her mother. As she learned evangelism from Sharon Beougher, Allen joined with other women to pray for her mother.

"Within those six weeks, I got a telephone call on a Wednesday night at about 11:30 at night — my mom was coming in from church late because she had stayed to receive Christ with her pastor," Allen told the gala attendees.

This is "eternal fruit" from the

faithful work and teaching of SWI, said Allen, wife of Midwestern Seminary President Jason Allen who now serves as the director of a similar program there: Midwestern Women's Institute.

"It has been said imitation is the highest form of flattery, and I unashamedly would tell you that I took everything that I could from SWI and copied it where I'm at Midwestern Seminary because I wanted something that would benefit these ladies like I had received," Allen said.

Kyndra Moore shared through a video testimony how SWI equipped and impacted her in now serving with her husband and family as Southern Baptist International Mission Board missionaries in Zimbabwe.

"I didn't know what God had in store for us and this was certainly not on my radar," Moore said, "but God knew....He knew what

He was training me for and He used SWI to prepare me."

Moore said the "biggest thing that SWI did for me was it taught me that I wasn't just going to be the wife of someone who was trained, but I was going to be trained myself....SWI helped me to be a partner in ministry with my husband so that we together can do what God has called us to do, to reach our potential, and to make the name of Jesus known to the nations, so thank you, SWI. Thank you, Mrs. Mohler. Thank you, all of the staff who poured into me, and poured into our ministry. I know that your fruit is endless; it's reaching Zimbabwe," Moore said.

Helen Logan, a 2000 graduate and former instructor, expressed gratitude that SWI taught her that her worldview "needs to line up with God's Word." Because of that, she is able to use what she learned as she teaches and trains up her own children as well as modeling a biblical worldview for church members.

During SWI's 20 years, 309 students have graduated from the program with an additional 14 graduates this May, prepared through biblical studies courses taught by a world-class team of Southern Seminary faculty and SWI faculty.

Southern Seminary professor Robert Plummer, in an SWI promotional video, said, "When I first saw the lineup of the courses that are taught in SWI and I learned about the instructors that were teaching them, I was astounded. I mean we have the top-notch; we have world-famous systematic theologians, New Testament scholars, and church history professors."

It's "not just a Sunday School class, this is a serious academic exercise to be equipped and prepared to minister in the local church," Plummer said.

For more information on the Seminary Wives Institute, visit sbts.edu/women/womens-programs/seminary-wives-institute/

EVOLUTION

cont. from p. 12

deep underground chambers, he suspects *Homo naledi* were able to control fire and utilize it for illumination.

The May 9 eLife article noted "no paleoanthropologist anticipated that a species like *H. naledi* existed in this region during" its time period.

Jonathan Wells, a biologist at the Seattle-based Discovery Institute, told Baptist Press (BP) that evolutionary scientists' surprise at *Homo naledi* is a significant aspect of the discovery. The Discovery Institute advocates the theory of intelligent design, which argues the universe is the product of intelligence rather than chance.

"Human origins are as mysterious now as they have ever been," Wells, author of *Zombie Science: Icons of Evolution*, said in written comments. "Science educators tell materialistic stories about how we are accidental byproducts of unguided evolution, and the stories are illustrated with iconic drawings of apes morphing into humans but the stories came first; fossils were plugged in later."

"As Yale paleoanthropologist Misia Landau once wrote, stories of human evolution 'far exceed

what can be inferred from the study of fossils alone,' so fossils are placed into preexisting narrative structures."

The alleged story of human evolution seems to become less clear as additional fossils are discovered, Wells observed.

Kurt Wise, professor of natural history at Baptist-affiliated Truett McConnell University in Cleveland, Ga., and a Harvard-trained paleontologist, told BP that *Homo naledi* were descendants of Adam and Eve who lived some 4,100 years in the past.

Wise, who believes the universe was created by God's direct action approximately 6,000 years ago, claimed radiometric dates calculated by scientists to be 100,000-800,000 radiometric years are found on fossils actually dating more recently.

A clue to the dating of *Homo naledi* fossils is their discovery in the types of caves likely formed during or immediately after Noah's flood, Wise said.

He reasons *Homo naledi* were humans "because humans are the only organisms known to cache or bury the bodies of their dead. Since it is unlikely that humans would go to all this trouble to bury non-humans, *Homo naledi* are humans, and the chambers of the cave with *Homo naledi* fossils are

almost certainly burial chambers," Wise said in written comments.

"Since the fossils date from after the Flood and are found in South Africa — a very long way from wherever Babel was located — these fossils must date from after the dispersion of people from Babel," Wise calculated.

The fact that "their skeletal structure is markedly different from modern humans suggests that the human population at the time of Babel and soon afterward was much more diverse than the present human population" he said.

Homo naledi are "different enough" from modern humans "to warrant a different species name," he said.

The eLife article noted in a similar vein, "Subequatorial Africa appears to have been a source of biological diversity and innovation" among species related to modern humans.

In summarizing the findings, eLife's editors wrote, "The existence of a relatively primitive species like *H. naledi* living this recently in southern Africa is at odds with previous thinking about human evolution."

The full eLife article is available online and titled, *Homo naledi* and Pleistocene hominin evolution in subequatorial Africa.

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SO WTZGKT BUF UVVGXTVXN QSO

ZGJVY UV FT; SVY SEOG WTZGKT LBTT,

G DUVA, BSPT U YGVT VG BJKL.

YSVUTE OUR: LQTVLN-LQG

Clue: E = L

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Genesis 6:12

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

TRUMP

cont. from p. 1

among Jewish people and Messianic Jewish worshipers [Jews who follow Jesus as Messiah] in the U.S.A. and all around the world," Worshill told Baptist Press in written comments.

During Trump's May 22-23 visit to Israel, he met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. Trump promised to "stand with Israel" and expressed optimism regarding "a renewed effort at peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians," according to media reports.

No previous American president has visited Israel this early in his first term. The New York Times reported. Trump is the first sitting U.S. president to visit the Old City, the walled section of Jerusalem claimed by both Israel and the Palestinians. The Old City was captured by Israel in a 1967 military conflict with Jordan and remains under Israeli control.

Among Trump's stops on the trip were the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the site traditionally regarded as the loca-

tion of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection; the Western Wall, the only portion of the Jewish Temple left standing after its destruction in A.D. 70; and the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial.

Worshill called Trump's visit an answer to many years of prayer and an important signal to the Middle East nations that the U.S. boldly stands with Israel.

"Like myself, many Messianic worshipers and Jewish believers feel that President Trump will work hard to help illustrate the truth that Israel desires safety and freedom for all of its inhabitants, including all faiths and ethnic backgrounds," Worshill said. "Like the U.S., Israel is a melting pot of people from all over the world."

Worshill added that while the killing of "innocent" Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Israel must stop, "I don't believe there will be true peace in Israel or on the earth until the Lord returns."

Arizona Republican U.S. Rep. Trent Franks, a Southern Baptist, said Trump's Israel visit signals "a new day has dawned" in U.S.-Israel relations after some tension between Is-

rael and the Obama presidential administration immediately prior to Trump.

At a May 22 press conference in Washington, D.C., Franks called on the Trump administration to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem. Such a move would be controversial because the United Nations and many countries regard portions of Jerusalem as Palestinian territory.

Moving the embassy to Jerusalem likely would be viewed as an endorsement of Israel's claim to the entire city.

"Jerusalem should never have been a bargaining chip to bring Palestinians to the negotiation table," Franks said at the press conference, according to prepared remarks provided by his office. "Jerusalem is the capital of the Jewish people and Israel the world's only Jewish state."

"America stood with the Jewish people in restoring their ancient state. It is now time to truly recognize her ancient and eternal city as her eternal and undivided capital."

A May 16 letter to Trump from the American Christian Leaders for Israel coalition noted that the Jerusalem Embassy Act, adopted by the U.S.

Congress in 1995, declared the U.S. embassy should be moved to Jerusalem by 1999.

The move has never occurred, the letter stated, because each U.S. president since the legislation was adopted has exercised a provision of the law allowing him to keep the embassy in Tel Aviv if necessary to protect the security interests of the United States.

"Now we ask you to send a message early in your administration that the United States will indeed honor its strongest and only true democratic ally in the Middle East by respecting its capital city — Jerusalem — and immediately moving the U.S. Embassy there," the letter stated.

The letter's signatories include at least five Southern Baptists:

■ Jerry Johnson, president of the National Religious Broadcasters in Manassas, Va.

■ Charles Stanley, pastor of First Church, Atlanta.

■ Mathew Staver, founder and chairman of Liberty Counsel in Maitland, FL.

■ Tony Crisp, pastor of Eastanlee Church in Riceville, Tn.

■ Dean Haun, pastor of First Church in Morristown, Tn.

During the 2016 presidential

campaign, Trump said he would move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem. Nikki Haley, the current Trump-appointed U.S. ambassador to the United Nations in New York City, told CBN News on May 16 that she believes "the capital should be Jerusalem and the embassy should be moved to Jerusalem."

Haley, a Republican, was serving as the first female governor of South Carolina before her United Nations appointment.

Messengers to the 2016 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis adopted a resolution "on prayer and support for Israel" that "commit[ted] to bless Israel" and supported its "right... to exist as a sovereign nation."

The resolution added, "We recommit ourselves to pray for God's peace to rule in Jerusalem and for the salvation of Israel, for the Gospel is 'God's power for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew' (Romans 1:16)."

During his first international trip, Trump also visited:

■ Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where he met with King Salman and received the Collar of Abdulaziz Al Saud, an honorary award given to non-Muslim heads of state.

■ Bethlehem, where he met with Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority which is based there.

■ Rome, where he met with Italian President Sergio Mattarella.

■ Vatican City, where he met with Roman Catholic Church Pope Francis.

■ Brussels, Belgium, where he met with King Philippe and newly-elected French President Emmanuel Macron, and attended the 28th Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which is based there.

■ Taormina, Italy, where he met with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.


Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

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1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Memorials and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and beautiful tradition. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, both those who are still with us and those who are no longer with us, and to help them be remembered.

APRIL

MEMORIALS

Mrs. Johnnie Ward
Dr. & Mrs. Randy Easterling
Mr. Robert W. Watkins
Mrs. Betty Cryder
Mr. George Westhamby
Dr. & Mrs. James H. May
Mrs. Faye S. White
Mrs. Virginia R. Blackwell
Mrs. Betty Williams
Mr. & Mrs. Terry E. Champion
Ms. Jeanne Williams
Mr. & Mrs. Randall Howell
Mr. Everett Wilson
Mr. & Mrs. James E. Clark
Mr. & Mrs. Rex McCord
Ms. Sharon Wilson
The Henderson Family
Mr. Thomas Lee Wilson
Mr. & Mrs. Hembree Brandon
Mr. Larry Windham
Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A. Buchanan
Mr. Joel E. Woodruff
Mr. & Mrs. Eddie S. Woodruff

MAY 1-15

HONORS

Ms. Kelly Algonas
Mr. & Mrs. John Adeock
All mothers of McCool BC
Kim Carpenter
Ms. Misti Frazier
Ms. Stacey Kirkland
Donna Criss
Mr. & Mrs. Jody Criss
Patricia Duckworth

Mrs. Diane Long
Marilyn Easley
Mr. & Mrs. Jody Criss
Mrs. Grace Pinnix French
Mr. & Mrs. Tommy Pinnix
Christine Frisbee
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Pilgrim
Dale Jackson
Mr. & Mrs. Alan C. Hurdle
Lynn Johnson
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Nail
Ms. Shilo Mandy
Mr. & Mrs. John Adeock
Miss Anna Scott Morris
Mrs. Nancy Y. Regan
Mrs. Searcy Pinnix
Mr. & Mrs. Tommy Pinnix
Ms. Vicki Stockair
Mr. & Mrs. John Adeock
Frances Williams
Ms. Michel Williams

MAY 1-15

MEMORIALS

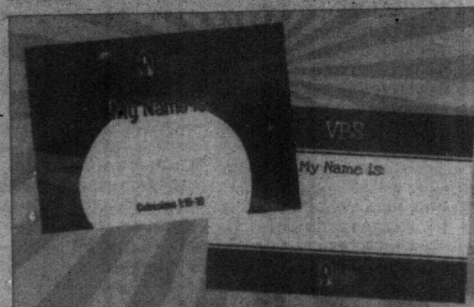
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Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Box
Mr. Grover Allen
Mr. & Mrs. Todd C. Harry
Mrs. Annie Lee Churchwell
Mr. John Arnold Sr.
Stanton BC
Ms. Laura Kate Ball
Ms. Shelia Turnage
Mrs. Myrtle Barefield
Dr. & Mrs. Harold Ward
Lillie Mae Barlow
Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Tillman
Mrs. Pauline Baxter
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Blair
Mr. Bobby Black

Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins
Catherine Blanton
Stanton BC
Peyton Hunter Bounds
Mr. & Mrs. Davy Keith
Mr. & Mrs. Hilmer Bynum
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Hughes
Eva Nell Brister
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Partle
Mrs. Mary Lou Barlow
Mr. Johnny Ray Brooks
Mr. & Mrs. Herman L. Dungan
Mr. Rex Brown
Ms. Joyce N. Burnette
Rev. Gerald Buckley
Bill & Leslie Ashford
Jabazed Buckley
Mr. Ted Buckley
Kim Hathcock Callahan
Mrs. Edith M. Aldridge
Mr. Richard Aldon Callaway
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Concord BC
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Mrs. Mary Jane Ervin
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Elaise Herrig
Mr. W. A. Jerring
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Mrs. Sara Hillman
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins
Mrs. Inez Hines
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins
Wendy Champion Hood
Mr. & Mrs. Terry E. Champion
Mrs. Mona Hudson
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Mildred Mott
J.O.Y. Class, Neshoba BC
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Ms. Joyce Hall

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Ms. Tina G. Roberts
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Mrs. Carolyn Toliver, Ronnie
& David
Brenton Joseph Ulmer
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Virgie Welch
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FREE VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL NAME TAGS

Free Vacation Bible School name tags are available from The Baptist Children's Village. There are two themes. One to compliment the Lifeway theme and one generic design to work with any curriculum. There are also opportunities for BCV speakers to come to your church and for VBS mission projects.

Please go to www.baptistchildrensvillage.com for more information and to order your free name tags.

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2:00 TO 3:30 P.M.



The Path • Psalm 1:1-6

The CenterPeace of scripture is God, Author of every word of The Word. Put your thumbs into the very middle of your English Bible and open its pages. The center book of scripture is Psalms. Who doesn't love the Psalms? It is a book of worship and wisdom and wonder. It is a book of forgivings and thanksgivings and laments. It is filled with majestic hymns of praise to our amazing God and humble prayers of plain old persons who can't live without Him. It celebrates the reigns of earthly kings while reserving honor to The King of Kings. Inside, outside, upside down or sideways... there's a Psalm for you!

Psalms is separated into five divisions called "books" which bring to mind the Torah (The Law) or the first five books of the Bible. Each of these five "books" ends with a verse containing a doxology of praise as you can see in the last verses of Psalm 41, 72, 89, 106 and 150. King David, the Sweet Singer of Israel, was not the only writer. God chose many "Psalmists" to pen these precious words. The Old Testament was categorized into three main sections: The Law, The Prophets, The Writings. Psalms was part of The Writings. A reasonable definition of the word "Psalms" contains the idea of presenting praises to God while plucking a stringed instrument with the

fingers. My guitar-playing soul and my "prays-sing" heart smile at that thought.

We begin Summer 2017 studying Psalm One. This has been called the "gateway" Psalm which opens and swings widely, revealing the path of the journey of abundant, eternal life. Never forget this truth: where your feet take you, there you are, face to face with the consequences of the steps you choose.

Psalm One begins with "blessed" and ends with "perish" and between those two words lies the journey and the choice.

Robert Frost described "two roads" and finally chose the one less traveled. Moses, in some of his famous last words recorded in Deuteronomy 30, gave the children of Israel the choice of life and death, blessing and curse. Two chapters later, Moses wrote the first Rock song. He also wrote Psalm 90. In Jeremiah 17:7-8 we read the choice of the nation of Judah to be a scrubby bush in a dry desert or a fruit-yielding tree planted by the

water. In His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7, Jesus describes the narrow gate of healthy fellowship versus the wide road of destructive waywardness. The Psalm writers are in good company with this theme that runs throughout scripture: in this journey, there is a right path and a wrong path and we must make a choice.

In six concise, powerful verses, the writer of Psalm One presents readers with one question: Do you want to be a heavyweight who lives a life that gives glory to God or a lightweight who lives a life that brings glory to yourself? The first three verses describe the heavyweight. The last three verses describe the lightweight.

Heavyweight versus Lightweight: Righteousness versus Wickedness. Life versus Death. Delight in Meditation versus Disdain for the Destination. Healthy fruit-bearing trees with deep roots that are planted to stay versus Chaff (the emp-

ty husk which covers wheat grain) that with a "poof" is easily blown away. Even Robert would not be Frost-y on this decision. High road versus low road. Just ask Jesus for directions with His GPS: God's Positioning System.

The Heavyweight will not walk along with the wicked or slow down long enough to stand in the midst of sinners and would never choose to take his seat in a spot where scoffers would mock his Great and Mighty God. He finds his delight in the word and ways of the Lord. He spends his time in meditation on those truths. To "meditate" means to mumble in wonder and amazement, to spend enough time to growl and gnaw and chew the delicious bone of truth all the way to the sweet marrow in the center. How's your meditation time...Bow Wow or Whine Whine?

The definition of your "walk" has little to do with the footprints you leave and everything to do with Whose footprints you follow. Your "walk" is your character, your way of life and the choices you make at the fork in the road. Follow the nail-scarred footprints on the CROSSroad.

Brown is staff evangelist, First Church, Richland.



Explore the Bible

with Becky Brown

Love Like Christ • John 15:9-17

My wife and I will soon be celebrating our twenty-second anniversary. Time has flown! Like most couples starting out, we had very little outside of a nervous love for each other to get us started. That love has grown deeper through years and tears. It is that love that has revealed why Jesus compared His relationship with His church as a husband to his bride. This human relationship is the closest that we will ever come to experiencing God's love while on earth. What other relationship is as intimate as the one between you and your spouse?

With that picture in mind, we find in John 15 that we are to love as Christ loved (12). Over twenty years have taught me much in the ways of marital love. Loving my loved ones is easy, yet the words of Jesus are for me to love all people just as He has loved them. That is a tall order. I am all too human, full of faults and examples of not being very loving towards others. Left to myself, loving others as Jesus loved them would be nearly impossible. How can I best express the love of Jesus towards others?

Remain right where I am

As a child I prayed to receive Christ as my Savior. His unending love is as real today as it was then. The love that Christ has

for me has never been amended. Verse 9 reads that Jesus loves us just as His Father has loved Him. Wrap your mind around that thought: a perfect love between our perfect, all-loving, all-knowing God and His perfect Son. That is what we have been brought to. This love is not fleeting or dependent upon my performance. This is a love unlike anything we know.

We are told to abide in that love (9). The word abide at its heart means to remain, to stay put. Jesus is clear: the love that we first experienced in salvation is still present in our lives and from it we are not to depart. To make the point clear, Jesus uses the word abide no less than six times in 15:1-11. Stay put in the love that first rescued you and saved you from your sins.

Give all that I have

A byproduct of my Godly marriage is our

sons. What a thrill it has been to watch them grow in the same faith their grandparents passed on to their mother and I. Part of their growth has been instructing them in the fine art of missions. Our list of family mission trips grows every year and with that our hope is that they see that loving other people is never a choice, it is a command. The words of 15:12 make this command clear. We are to love others

just as Jesus has loved us. Again, this perfect love from God, through Jesus, to us being spread to all we encounter.

How is this love for others supposed to be lived out? Ask yourself just how Jesus has loved you? What has Jesus done for you? Answer those questions and then pass that same love to those around you. Give all that you have in order for the good news of Jesus to be spread. That youth trip that needs sponsors? Those shoeboxes at

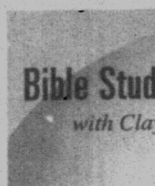
Christmas? That panhandler in the parking lot? No action that shares the love of Jesus is too small.

Prove I am whose I claim to be

If I claim to love my family, then there must be some tangible proof that I do what I say. Same can be said of my love for Jesus. True, you and I have a grace based faith. We do not have to work and earn any amount of our salvation. We work simply out of obedience and we are commanded to obey the words of Jesus (14) in loving others. This is how we are known to be followers of Jesus: by obeying (John 13:35).

The proof that we are asked to give is simple loving other people. Verse 16 states that we are expected to bear fruit. This fruit is loving others like Jesus. That is the proof that shows the world who it is that we belong to. No, our proof is not something we have to work at and earn. Christians do not do what we do in order to go to heaven. We do what we do in response that we are going to heaven.

Anthony is director of the Collaborative Missionary Network, Oxford/Holly Springs.



Bible Studies for Life

with Clay Anthony

EGYPT

cont. from p. 1

No terrorist group has claimed responsibility for this latest assault.

The bus attack occurred less than two months after bombings claimed by the Islamic State terrorist group targeted Coptic Christians on Palm Sunday, and nearly six months after the main Coptic cathedral in Cairo was bombed in an attack also claimed by the Islamic State.

In all, terror attacks against Coptic Christians since December have claimed more than 100 lives in Egypt. Coptic believers, who trace their origins to the Gospel writer Mark in the middle of the first century, comprise roughly 10% of Egypt's population.

Edens, professor of theology and Islamic studies at New Orleans Seminary, told Baptist Press the latest attack likely was carried out by a group of Islamists who want to establish an Islamic republic in Egypt and create chaos for the government.

"A minority in Islam is trying to polarize the situation," Edens said. "They're trying to pull dissatisfied Muslims to their side. They're trying to overthrow the government. They are trying to minimize non-jihadist Muslims' influence... in the culture."

Islamic terrorists in Egypt are "constantly dissatisfied" because the government has "compromised" by not living according to pure Sharia law and instead has adopted "modern technology and modern banking and modern commerce," Edens said.

He added that such dissatisfaction help motivate terrorism.

Christians in Egypt are "soft targets" for dissatisfied terrorists, he said, because many live in remote regions like the site of the May 26 attack where it is difficult for the government to provide security.

Christians around the world must respond to Islamic terrorism, Edens said, by praying for both the perpetrators and the surviving victims. Christians in Egypt need prayer for divine empowerment to witness and comfort from the Holy Spirit, he pointed out.

An article by Edens posted on the IMB website May 22 called Christians to focus their prayers on the salvation of Muslims during the feast of Ramadan, which occurs May 26-June 24 this year.

Yet "we cannot simply and only pray," Edens said. "We have to give [to missions] and we have to be involved. There are Muslims in every metropolitan area of the United States. There are Copts in most of those cities, and we can apply our prayers directly to our neighbors. We need to reach out with love, compassion and Gospel fervor."

Just for the Record



A baby/child dedication was held on Mother's Day, 2017, at **ETHEL CHURCH, ATTALA**. Those participating (lr) are Ralph Hunt, Luke Nail, holding Aden Thomas Nail, Nikki Nail, holding Keeli Grace Nail and standing in front, Alana Renee Nail. Also, Beau and Jamie Varner, holding John Aden Varner and standing in front, Addison Craft Varner.



Pastor Will McNeese and Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, watch as Grover Lawson and Otis Jenkins burn the note for the new Family Life Center at **PEACH CREEK CHURCH, PANOLA ASSOCIATION**. The building was completed in 2013 and paid off early.



FAIR RIVER CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, honored house mothers of the Baptist Children's Village Dickerson Place: Helen Anderson, Brenda Schexnayder, and Patsy Gilmore (not shown); Ida Mae Lofton (oldest mother) and Holly Francis (mother with most children present). Jay Anderson, pastor



WOODLAND CHURCH, PONTOTOC COUNTY, was able to celebrate retiring its building debt several years early with a note burning celebrating on Homecoming Day. Pictured are Jim Sewell, Elizabeth Payne, Everett Taylor, Bro. Justin Varmon, Krystal Jenkins, and Rick Haulcomb.



NEW VISION COMMUNITY CHURCH, SUMMIT, held a baby dedication May 21 during morning worship. Pictured are Wally, Lela, Brittney and Avalyn Jones, Meris, Brittany, Henry and Ryan Spiers with pastor Floyd Davis.



SILVER CREEK CHURCH, MCCOMB, recognized their graduates May 21. From left: College- Tena Hall; high school seniors- Dillon Morris, Rena' Lesley, Graycee Boyd, and Angelique' Ferrage.



INGOMAR CHURCH, NEW ALBANY, held a baby dedication in December with nine children dedicated (eight shown.)



IMMANUEL CHURCH, GREENWOOD, recognized its high school and college graduates on Senior Recognition Day.



GILLSBURG CHURCH, GILLSBURG, honored high school graduates C.J. Brumfield, Blayde McDaniel, Anna Aucoin, Blake Fairburn, and Jacie Easley.



DUCK HILL CHURCH, DUCK HILL, held a baby dedication May 14, with six babies being dedicated to the Lord. Tim Buchanan, pastor.

In other Church News:

➤ **Academy Church, Blue Mountain**, is hosting the Dixie Echoes Quartet June 9, 7 p.m. For more information, call (662) 837-4847.

➤ **Meadow Grove Church, Brandon**, is hosting the Down East Boys and Jason Runnels in concert June 3, 6 p.m. Love offering.



Members of **GILLSBURG CHURCH, GILLSBURG**, took a day trip to tour Sanford Antiques in Collins and eat lunch at Shady Acres village in Seminary.